

truly the crossroads that we have reached today.

Thomas Jefferson recognized that 190-plus years ago and pointed out that with economy comes liberty and freedom. With as he called it profusion, or what we call today big government spending, comes servitude of the people to their government. That is not what our Founding Fathers intended when they created the United States Constitution which, in my opinion, is in need of one change that is vitally needed, and that is a balanced budget amendment to the United States Constitution.

I will have more to say about this in the future, but I urge my colleagues to oppose this budget and support real fiscal reform, which would be to adopt a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution.

#### ADMINISTRATION DESERVES PRAISE FOR NEW IRAN AND STOP-LOSS POLICIES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to call the House's attention to two very positive developments in the administration's handling of foreign policy and military affairs.

First, the administration offered Iran a new beginning in relations between our two countries. He did that on Friday. It was part of his message to the Iranian people and to their leaders on the occasion of the Persian new year.

The President said, "My administration is now committed to diplomacy that addresses the full range of issues before us, and Iran, and to pursuing constructive ties among the United States, Iran, and the international community. This process will not be advanced by threats. We seek, instead, engagement that is honest and grounded in mutual respect."

Mr. Speaker, President Obama is determined to settle differences with Iran peacefully. Of course, I don't have any, nor should any of us have any, illusions that it will be easy to reduce tensions with Iran. That's because they continue to develop a nuclear program which could be used to build nuclear weapons.

But I do believe that diplomacy can produce good results over time. A diplomatic effort can begin within the next year, or in the next week actually, when Secretary of State Hillary Clinton attends a conference on Afghanistan in The Netherlands. Iran is expected to attend the conference, and Secretary Clinton could interact with Iranian officials.

The United States and Iran have cooperated in the past over Afghanistan, and this may be one area of common ground. But at the very least, the administration has created an environment where peaceful progress can be made, and I commend the administration for that.

The second development that is positive came last Wednesday when Secretary of Defense Gates announced that he is moving to end the Pentagon's terrible stop-loss policy. Under stop-loss, Mr. Speaker, thousands of soldiers have been forced to remain in the military even after their enlistments have expired.

Ending stop-loss is long overdue. It has been essentially a backdoor draft, and it's one of the policies that has stretched our military to the limit, putting a terrible strain on our soldiers and on their families.

The Army has acknowledged this problem. The Army Vice Chief of Staff told a Senate subcommittee last week that forcing soldiers to take longer deployments has helped produce a "stressed and tired force."

Prolonged deployments, Mr. Speaker, which have separated soldiers from their families for these very long periods of time, have contributed to a tragic rise in the number of suicides among military personnel. The Army has confirmed that there were 133 suicides last year alone, and that's just the Army.

Another serious problem is that many soldiers who have left the military have not had a happy homecoming. The unemployment rate for veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan is 11.2 percent, which is higher than the rate for nonveterans.

That is one of the reasons why I support the administration's economic recovery plan, which actually is the third policy development that we should be talking about today, because this plan will produce millions of new jobs. I would have liked to have seen an even bigger recovery plan to create even more jobs, but Mr. Speaker, I have to disagree with the administration on some policies occasionally, and that's stretching beyond where their good intentions are.

I also have to disagree with the administration on some foreign policy issues. But on this occasion, I don't want to go into that. I want to applaud the administration for taking three important steps that can make the world a more peaceful place and that will lift a very heavy burden off our brave troops and their families.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. MORAN of Kansas addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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#### CAP-AND-TRADE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. ROGERS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ROGERS of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I rise today for the urgency that faces the United States—and I

hope every single American engages in this debate.

The economy has certainly taken a great toll on the great State of Michigan, where I'm from, and President Obama's recently offered budget, if enacted, is just one more slap at working people of the great State of Michigan and all around this country.

It creates a cap-and-tax program for the first time in this history. Something that used to be free, you're now taxed to use it.

The National Association of Manufacturers estimate this plan will cost Michigan alone 121,000 jobs by 2030. It also increases gas rates by 141 percent and electric rates by 177 percent. What does that mean to you? If you have a \$70 per month electric bill today, it's going up to \$193 per month just for the enactment of the cap-and-tax program.

If you're paying about \$1.91, as you are at the pump today, if enacted, the cap-and-tax program takes that to \$4.60 a gallon. Good luck in economic prosperity.

If you're a UAW worker in Michigan today and you happen to work in the great city of Lansing, Michigan, you are already paying a State gas tax, a Federal gas tax. You're paying a tax for your driver's license, a tax for your license tag, you're paying a sales tax on the car which you purchased. You pay a city income tax, a State income tax, and a Federal incomes. You pay your FICA tax.

If you go home and if you enjoy a beer after work, there's a special excise tax on the beer that you consume. You click on your cable TV, you pay a tax for that as well. You sit in your Barcalounger. Guess what? You paid a sales tax on that, too.

Mr. President, more taxes will not solve the problem. It will exacerbate the problem. Working families in this country deserve a break, not platitudes, not kind words, not silver-tongued speeches.

These people are right on the edge of losing their homes, and we're going to enact a tax that makes it that much harder for them to make the very payments to stay in their homes today.

Every time you tax a job like this—imagine this. We build cars. Imagine if the taxes go that much up on just your home ownership costs—your electric bill, your gas bill, when you fill up with gasoline—imagine what happens to the manufacturing base that uses energy. The cost for producing that car goes up.

So you're your paying more for gas a gallon, you're paying more for your electric bill. And, guess what? If you want to go out and buy a car, good luck. The cost of that electricity increase is built into the cost of that car.

We no longer will remain competitive. I tell you what—China loves this idea. India loves this idea. Absolutely. They want to make it prohibitive for us to build anything in the United States of America. And how do we do it in this budget? We increase the budget